

**SPECIAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
APPROVED MINUTES**

**TOWN OF ATHERTON  
May 13, 2015  
6:00pm  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
94 ASHFIELD ROAD**

**1. ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT: Philip Lively  
Eric Lane  
Paul Tonelli  
William Grindley**

**EXCUSED: Mary Beth Widmer**

City Attorney Bill Connors and Town Planner Lisa Costa Sanders were present.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- 2. Conditional Use Permit – 30 Alejandra Avenue (APN 070-250-190) – Request from Menlo School and Menlo College for a Conditional Use Permit (No. CUP2015-00001) Amendment Authorizing Limited Sunday Use for Cartan Field.**

Town Planner Lisa Costa Sanders introduced the item.

**OPEN PUBLIC HEARING**

Chop Keenan, Menlo College Board of Trustees, spoke on behalf of Menlo College. He stated that they have amended their request as follows:

1. School year: the College has modified their application request and are now asserting that there would be no scheduled baseball games on Sunday. They ask for accommodation for a Friday or Saturday baseball game rainout. It was noted that many teams that play Menlo College travel a great distance and incur expenses, so make up games are necessary if rainouts occur.
2. Summer: the College is requesting four Sundays during the coming summer months to fulfill their contractual obligations with the Jewish Community Center (JCC). The requested Sundays are June 21, July 5, July 19, and August 2. The times for usage of the field would remain 10am to 5pm.

Mr. Keenan noted that Menlo-Atherton High School, Holbrook-Palmer Park, and Menlo Circus Club all host Sunday events.

Deborah Jue, acoustics expert with Wilson, Ihrig & Associates, spoke to address questions from the Commission. She verified that the activities at the College are compliant with the Town's noise ordinance.

Commissioner Grindley asked about working with other institutions to find space to hold activities. Steven Weiner, Vice President of Menlo College, noted that both Sacred Heart and Menlo-Atherton High School were fully booked although the nature of the activities going on at those locations was not known.

Commissioner Grindley asked about the Julie Foudy soccer camp that was scheduled. Steven Weiner answered that that specific camp was rescheduled.

The Commission asked how many baseball home games occur in a full season for Menlo College. Steven Weiner answered that it was between eight and ten games. Chair Lively asked how many innings need to be played for a game to be considered complete. Steven Weiner answered that the number of innings is seven.

The Commission asked for specifics about the scheduling of games. Steven Weiner answered that the Menlo College baseball season starts in early January. The games are typically scheduled on Friday and Saturday. The start time is typically noon but games as part of a double-header start at 11am.

Commissioner Grindley asked if the neighbors have seen the new proposal. Chop Keenan answered that there has not been consensus with the neighbors.

Chair Grindley noted that the neighbors should have a chance to see the new proposal and weigh in.

Rich Thesing, Atherton resident, spoke in opposition to allowing commercial camps to operate at Menlo College. He noted that they are larger than normal camps, they are noisy and they tend to have more participants. He has a problem with commercial activities being allowed on the field.

Stuart Rosenberg, 1 Brittany Meadows, commented that Menlo School closes Wunderlich Field on Sundays and it is a blessing. He understands the position the College is in but empathizes with the neighbors. He asked if there was a possibility that there would be a double-header on a Sunday that was used to play a rained out game. Chop Keenan noted that the field would only be used between 10am and 5pm in the event of a rain out.

Paul Getty, Atherton resident, spoke against the proposed exceptions to the 1965 conditional use permit. He noted significant encroachments since 1965 and feels that Sunday should be a day of rest. He remarked that the College has not made a compelling case for Sunday use. Additionally, he would like the Commission to look into the practice of the College hosting for-profit camps on any day.

Commissioner Grindley asked if he has any evidence that the school knowingly violated the 1965 CUP. Mr. Getty responded that he has anecdotal evidence as he lives adjacent to the field and has seen infrastructure improvements and activity increase.

Mike Greenberg, 2 Brittany Meadows, spoke in opposition to the exception. He noted that during the school year there is some relief from field usage but during the summer the camps are all day. He commented that there is a high portion of Sundays where the backyard of College neighbors is unusable. He added that one day a week with no activity on the field is not unreasonable.

Chair Lively clarified that the College is asking for only four Sundays in the summer. Mike Greenberg noted that four Sundays is a third of the Sundays in the summer. He also would like the idea of for-profit camps on the fields to be investigated.

Richard Moran, President of Menlo College, spoke on behalf of the College's request. He noted two distinct differences:

1. The Menlo College teams are not playing local teams so rainouts can be very costly to visiting teams.
2. The College is a residential campus. The students are also residents of Atherton.

Commissioner Lane asked for clarification on when the summer camps occur. Steven Weiner answered that the camps run from approximately May 15 until August 2.

Commissioner Tonelli asked what types of camps are held on the campus. Steven Weiner answered that there are sports camps, outdoor camps, and academic camps.

Commissioner Lane asked how many days of noise there are. Steven Weiner answered that between May 15 and August 2 there would be about 50 days of camp. Most of these camps occur between 10am and 3pm.

Commissioner Tonelli asked for details about the AYSO coaching camp on August 2. Steven Weiner answered that it is basic instruction for AYSO coaches including soccer drills and instruction.

Commissioner Grindley asked what percentage of the College's total revenue the camps contribute. Steven Weiner answered 5%.

Commissioner Lane asked about the activities scheduled for July 5. He noted that it is on holiday weekend that would typically be a time when families use their backyards to entertain. Steven Weiner answered that Wunderlich field is under construction and they have exhausted other options. Chop Keenan noted that all activities are noise compliant.

Deborah Jue, acoustic engineer gave an overview of the noise studies completed by her firm.

Chair Lively asked why the noise reading was taken away from the property line. Deborah Jue explained that noise readings must be taken away from structures that will provide bounce back so the reading was moved out about five feet from a solid fence.

Chair Lively asked why the readings were taken from 7am to 7pm when the noise ordinance covers from 7am to 10pm. Deborah Jue noted that the readings are not taken after 7pm because there is no field activity during those hours.

City Attorney, Bill Conners, explained the Town's noise ordinance and how it is interpreted.

Deborah Jue explained the nature of repetitive peaks in relation to the noise ordinance and the readings that were taken.

#### CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING

Discussion ensued about the College's request for an exception. The Commission determined that no decision could be made without a more complete and detailed proposed summer schedule.

**MOTION to continue the item to the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting on May 27, 2015, with the request that Menlo College provide a comprehensive schedule of the proposed Sunday-use calendar.**

**M/S Lane/Lively      Ayes: 4      Noes: 0**

**3. ADJOURN** - The meeting adjourned at 7:24pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Lisa Costa Sanders, Town Planner